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A LETTER

To the Right Honorable

A. Earl of Essex,

FROM

DUBLIN.

Declaring the strange Obstinacy of

PAPISTS,

( As here, so ) in IRELAND;

Who being evidently Convict and Condemn'd for Criminal  
Causes, yet at their Death, and upon the Gallows, absolutely  
deny the Fact; And the erroneous and impious Motives, given by  
their Priests, by which they are deluded to do it.

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Joshua VII. xix, xx.

*My Son, give glory to God, confess to him, and tell me what thou hast  
done.*

*And Achan said, Indeed I have sinned, &c.*

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A. EARL of ESSEX,

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Declaring

The strange Obstinacy of *PAPISTS*,  
(as here, so) in *Ireland*, &c.

May it please your Lordship,



N Sunday last I received yours of *February* the 25<sup>th</sup>, and have inquired into the Truth of the Story of an *Irish Papist* Executed in this Countrey, who at the Gallows denied the Fact for which he was to suffer; but after he had Hanged awhile, the Rope by accident breaking, and the Malefactor coming to himself, confess'd it to be true.

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The person was one *John Curphy* a *Papist*, who, this *Lent Assizes* will be Seven years, was Tried before Mr. *Baron Hene* ( then His Majesties Serjeant ) for *Burglary* in the County of *Monaghan*, and being found Guilty, was condemned to dye. At the Gallows this *Curphy* denied the Fact with great Confidence and Asseverations of his Innocency, and was turned off the Ladder, persisting in his denial; but after he had hanged some little space, the Rope by chance breaking, and he falling down a little stunn'd, came again to himself, and fell to his prayers, thanking God that he had given him time to declare the Truth, and not to go out of the World with a Lye in his mouth, and then confessed himself Guilty of the Fact for which he was Condemned.

Afterwards this *Curphy* was brought back to the Gaol by the Sheriff Mr. *Lucas*, and application made to *Baron Hene* to Reprieve the Prisoner; but he telling the Sheriff that the Judge had done his duty, and the Sheriff must do his, *Curphy* was Executed.

This Account I write from Mr. *Baron Hene's* own mouth, this very morning, who perfectly knows this Narrative to be true, and was the Person who acquainted your Lordship with it, at your first coming into the Government.

He also tells me, that to the best of his remembrance, this *Curphy* owned, That the Priest had given him Absolution, upon condition not to discover any thing, or declare his Accomplices: And that he need not doubt his Salvation, the Fact not being committed against Gods People; meaning (as he supposed) the *Papists*; or to that effect. *Lucas* the then Sheriff, lives in *Monaghan*, and the Records of this Tryal are there, wherefore I have waited upon Mr. Justice *Johnson*, who goes that Circuit, and left with his

him a Memorial of these Particulars, who will inquire into them, and give me an attested Account thereof, which when they come to my hands, I will transmit to your Lordship.

Mr. Justice *Johnson* also told me another Relation, something of this nature There was a special Commission lately directed to himself, to try several Malefactors for Murthers and Robberies, committed in the County of *Cavan*. The Persons Indicted, were two of the *Duffies*, and one *Plunkett*, all *Irish Papists*. The *Duffies* when they were first apprehended, *Confest that they were Guilty of the Crimes laid to their Charge, and gave the same Evidence also against Plunkett at his Tryal*, upon which, with other most undeniable Circumstances, *Plunkett* was Condemned. The *Duffies* were afterwards tryed for the same Facts, and Condemned also.

I should likewise have told your Lordship, That *Plunkett upon his first Apprehension, owned to Sir John Edgworth, that he was Guilty.*

After the Sentence was past upon them, one *Brady* a Priest, came to these *Duffies* in Prison, and used Arguments to induce them to Recant their Evidence; but they persisting in the Truth, would not be prevailed upon.

Mr. Justice *Johnson* hearing this, sent for *Brady*, who, upon his Examination, could not deny, but that he had been with the *Duffies*, to persuade them to Renonnce their Testimony against *Plunkett*.

Whereupon the Judge Committed him. The Conclusion was, That one of the *Duffies* (the other being Reprieved) suffer'd, confessing the Fact, and persevering in his Accusation of *Plunkett*. And *Plunkett* dyed

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*as obstinate, on the other side, utterly denying, that he was Guilty, with Curses upon himself, and Renunciations of Salvation, if he were not innocent.*

I must also crave leave to trouble your Lordship with another Narrative of this sort, which I had from Sir Richard Reynell, one of the Judges of the Kings Bench.

About October last was Twelvemonth, there was tryed before him, upon a Commission of Oyer and Terminer, one Neile-O-Neile, an Irish Papist, for a Murther committed at Rathdrum in the County of Wicklow.

This Neile-O-Neile in Prison, and at his Tryal, owned to several Persons, ( amongst which I hear my Lord of Strafford then in Ireland was one ) *That he was Guilty, and was so found by the Jury, the Fact being clearly proved against him: But at the Gallows, he utterly denied it.*

*These three Particulars being averr'd to me this very day, by the three aforementioned Judges, I humbly presume to send them your Lordship as true.*

*I fear I have tyred your Lordship with this long Letter, but I thought it my Duty to give you the fullest Account I could of your Commands: who am,*

Your LORDSHIPS

Dublin, Mar. 5.

1675.

Most Obedient and Faithful Servant

*Postscript.* It is thought reasonable to suppress the Name of the Person that wrote this Letter, for fear of exposing him to danger, from the Party concerned in the Information.

## *A Postscript in the same Letter.*

My Lord Chief Justice *Booth*, my Lord Chief Baron,  
and the Three Judges named in this Letter, all tell me,  
That the Criminals that dye in the Romish Persuasion,  
although apprehended in the very Fact, yet never confess ;  
for after they have had Absolution from the Priest, the  
Crime is (according to their Doctrine) totally taken  
away; and it having, as it were, never been, they may with  
a safe Conscience deny it.

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FINIS.

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